

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 H-01 SP-02

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5519

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION BERLIN UNN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL MUNICH

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 4013

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SOPN, OGEN, XH

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE MOVE OF RFE/RL TO U.S.

USNATO FOR AMBASSADOR TOON

REF: STATE 57405

1. SUMMARY. MOVING RFE/RL TO THE UNITED STATES WOULD
GIVE SOME NEW PROPAGANDA AMMUNITION TO THE SOVIETS. IT
WOULD CERTAINLY NOT MAKE THE REGIME ANY LESS HOSTILE TO
THE RADIOS. WE EXPECT THAT A MOVE TO THE U.S. MIGHT RESULT
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IN A SLIGHT LESSENING OF RL'S EFFICIENCY. END SUMMARY.

2. THERE IS, OF COURSE, NOTHING THAT THE RADIOS COULD DO
THAT WOULD RECONCILE THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES TO THEIR
EXISTENCE. SOVIET OPPOSITION TO THE RADIOS IS DEEPER
THAN THAT OF EASTERN EUROPEAN REGIMES. IN ADDITION TO
RL'S RUSSIAN AND NATIONALITY SERVICE BROADCASTS TO THE

USSR, THE SOVIETS OBJECT VERY STRONGLY TO THE RFE BROADCASTS TO EASTERN EUROPE. THE KREMLIN WOULD PROBABLY SEE A MOVE TO THE U.S. AS A SIGN THAT THE RADIOS WERE IN TROUBLE, AND PERHAPS WERE HEADED FOR CLOSER U.S. CONTROL. THE SOVIETS MIGHT THEREFORE WELCOME THE MOVE, THOUGH IT WOULD NOT MAKE THEIR PROPAGANDA LINE ANY LESS HOSTILE. WE DO NOT KNOW A GREAT DEAL ABOUT THE VIEWS OF INTELLECTUALS AND OTHER TARGET AUDIENCES, BUT WE DOUBT THAT MANY WOULD SEE A MOVE AS HAVING BEEN MADE IN RESPONSE TO SOVIET PRESSURE. INDEED, WE DOUBT THAT VERY MANY OF RL'S LISTENERS ARE CONSCIOUS OF OR CARE ABOUT THE PHYSICAL LOCATION OF THE RADIOS.

3. A MOVE TO THE U.S. BY THE RADIOS WOULD PROBABLY BE SEIZED ON BY THE SOVIETS FOR PROPAGANDA USE, INCLUDING THEIR BUILDUP FOR THE BELGRADE CSCE REVIEW CONFERENCE. MOSCOW WOULD PORTRAY THE MOVE TO THE STATES AS RESULTING FROM THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MOSCOW'S "PRINCIPLED STAND" AGAINST THE RADIOS. THE SOVIETS MIGHT PORTRAY SUCH A MOVE AS A FIRST STEP TOWARD THE DESIRED GOAL OF CLOSING DOWN THE RADIOS ALTOGETHER, AND THEY WOULD PROBABLY BE ENCOURAGED TO STEP UP THEIR EFFORTS TO ATTAIN THIS GOAL. IN ADDITION, THEY WOULD PROBABLY USE THE MOVE OF THE RADIOS' HEADQUARTERS AWAY FROM GERMANY TO PUT FURTHER PRESSURE ON THE FRG, SPAIN AND PORTUGAL TO CLOSE THE TRANSMITTERS IN THOSE COUNTRIES.

4. NEWS PROGRAMMING WOULD PRESUMABLY NOT SUFFER FROM A MOVE TO THE U.S., AND WE SEE LITTLE, IF ANY LOSS FOR THE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT. THERE WOULD PRESUMABLY BE AN EFFECT

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ON MANY OF THE FEATURES PROGRAMS, SOME OF WHICH IN OUR OPINION ARE AMONG RL'S BEST (SEE MOSCOW 2384, NOTAL). THESE PROGRAMS THAT DRAW ON THE RESOURCES OF THE RUSSIAN COMMUNITIES IN GERMANY, FRANCE AND ISRAEL WOULD PRESUMABLY BECOME LESS TIMELY AND LESS LIVELY, ALTHOUGH THE USE OF AN EXPERT EUROPEAN OFFICE AND SATELLITE FEEDS MIGHT MITIGATE THIS TO SOME EXTENT. THOSE OF THE NATIONALITIES SERVICES THAT RELY ON EUROPEAN-BASED PROGRAMMING (E.G., SOME OF THE TURKISTANI AND SOME OF THE BALTIC LANGUAGES) WOULD PROBABLY ALSO SUFFER FROM A MOVE TO THE U.S.

5. A PERSONNEL TURNOVER CONNECTED WITH A MOVE TO THE US MIGHT HELP SOLVE THE CURRENT DISPUTE IN THE RL RUSSIAN SERVICE BETWEEN SOME "THIRD WAVE" EMPLOYEES AND SOME OF THE OLDER "SECOND WAVE" STAFF MEMBERS WHICH IS PRESUMABLY KNOWN TO THE SOVIETS AND PROBABLY PLEASES THEM TO THE EXTENT THAT THEY FEEL THAT IT MAKES RL PROGRAMMING LESS EFFECTIVE. WE WOULD SUPPORT ANY PERSONNEL CHANGES THAT WOULD REDUCE RL'S USE OF SOVIET-STYLE, HEAVY-HANDED PROPAGANDA.

6. THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES ARE PROBABLY LESS CONCERNED ABOUT THE OLD FASHIONED ANTI-COMMUNISTS ON RLS STAFF THAN THEY ARE ABOUT THE FACT THAT SOME RECENT EMIGRES FROM THE USSR, INCLUDING PEOPLE WITH A REPUTATION IN THE SOVIET UNION, ARE NOW ON THE AIR FOR RL. EVEN WITH AN EFFECTIVE EUROPEAN BUREAU, A MOVE TO THE U.S. WOULD PROBABLY MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR RL TO USE THE SERVICES OF SUCH NEW EMIGRANTS AS, FOR EXAMPLE, GALICH AND NEIZVESTNIY. IN OUR VIEW, USE OF SUCH PEOPLE IS ONE OF THE BEST FEATURES OF RL PROGRAMMING AND WE WOULD BE SORRY IF ANY MOVE AWAY FROM EUROPE RESULTED IN LOSING THEIR SERVICES.

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